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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6027
INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J5 MIAMI FL
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 000058

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WHA/CAR FOR ALAIN NORMAN
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/30/2028

TAGS: KCRM PGOV TNRB PHUM PREL XL VC

SUBJECT: ST. VINCENT POLICE OFFICER ALLEGES RAPE BY PRIME
MINISTER

REF: 07 BRIDGETOWN 1563

Classified By: DCM O.P. Garza for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶11. (U) This cable is an action request; please see Para 5.

¶12. (C) Summary: On January 30, 2008 a prominent lawyer and key Embassy contact called PolOff to request help with a legal case in which a St. Vincent police officer alleges that SVG Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves raped her. The contact claims that both she and the police officer in question have been the victims of threats and intimidation and that the police force has refused to investigate the matter. End Summary.

¶13. (C) Nicole Sylvester, the President of the St. Vincent Human Rights Association and until recently the President of the SVG Bar Association, is a key embassy contact, especially in compiling information for the annual human rights report. On January 30 she called PolOff to report that a female police officer approached her on January 4, 2008, claiming that she had been raped the previous day by a "very influential member of society," whom she later claimed was Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves. According to the alleged victim, when she attempted to report the offense, the local police force refused to investigate.

¶14. (C) Sylvester says that since she took the case, she has received threatening phone calls, and the police officer has been intimidated and warned by superiors not to raise the allegations again. Sylvester has asked the U.S. Embassy for any possible assistance in handling the matter, and inquired whether any international organizations or bodies existed that could assist in ensuring that the matter was investigated, and if warranted, pursued in court.

¶15. (C) COMMENT AND ACTION REQUEST: This is the second time in one month that Embassy contacts have asked for U.S. assistance in protecting police officers who had witnessed (or suffered) wrongdoing by high-level government officials (reftel). Post requests guidance from Washington on how to respond to Ms. Sylvester and what, if any, assistance can be offered. END COMMENT AND ACTION REQUEST.

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